

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 4013

USCINCEUR FOR POLAD, USDOCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CY, TU
SUBJECT: TURKISH CYPRIOT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. LONG-SIMMERING DISSENSION WITHIN THE PRO-DENKTASH NATIONAL
UNITY PARTY (NUP), FUELED BY PERSONAL RIVALRIES AND DISCONTENT
WITH "PRIME MINISTER" KONUK'S PRESENT CABINET, HAS NOW BOILED
TO THE SURFACE, TOPPLING THE "TFSC" FINANCE MINISTER, PUTTING
PRESSURE ON EDUCATION MINISTER TO RESIGN, AND HIGHLIGHTING
INTERNAL NUP DISCORD. (NUP, IT WILL BE RECALLED, GAINED 54
PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND 30 OUT OF 40 SEATS IN LEGISLATIVE
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ELECTIONS LAST JULY. FOUNDED BY DENKTASH, IT HAS BEEN NOW
HEADED - AT LEAST IN THEORY - BY KONUK SINCE DENKTASH'S
ELECTION AS "TFSC" PRESIDENT AND HIS MANDATORY RESIGNATION
FROM PARTY LEADERSHIP.)

2. FINANCE MINISTER MEHMET ALTINAY RESIGNED DEC 15, CHARGING

THAT DISUNITY AND LACK OF DISCIPLINE WITH THE NUP HAD CREATED UNCOMFORTABLE AND IMPOSSIBLE WORKING CONDITIONS. RESIGNATION WAS SUBMITTED FOLLOWING CHARGES BY KONUK AT CABINET MEETING EARLIER IN THE DAY THAT ALTINAY HAD IRRESPONSIBLY FAILED TO ATTEND RECENT ASSEMBLY DISCUSSIONS ON MATTERS CONCERNING HIS MINISTRY. IN TURN, ALTINAY, WHO IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS ILL-EQUIPPED, TOO YOUNG, AND TOO INEXPERIENCED TO DEAL WITH THE COMMUNITY'S CRITICAL FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, REPORTEDLY ACCUSED KONUK OF UNETHICALLY GOING BEHIND HIS BACK AND MAKING CONTACTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW FINANCE MINISTER.

3. ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY, EDUCATION MINISTER HAS FOUND HIMSELF UNDER PRESSURE TO RESIGN BECAUSE OF ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES IN THE RECENTLY PROMULGATED TEACHERS' PROMOTION AND ASSIGNMENT LISTS. OPPOSITION DEPUTIES HAVE CLAIMED THAT EROGLU PERSONALLY CHANGED 60 PERCENT OF THE ORIGINAL LISTS, WHICH HAD BEEN RECOMMENDED JOINTLY BY EDUCATION OFFICIALS AND TEACHERS' UNION, SO AS TO FAVOR TEACHERS FROM HIS OWN CONSTITUENCY IN FAMAGUSTA. EROGLU HAS DENIED ANY IMPROPRIETIES. NUP SUCCESSFULLY FENDED OFF ATTEMPT OF OPPOSITION AND SOME NUP DEPUTIES TO INITIATE PARLIAMENTARY INVESTIGATION OF THE CHARGES, BUT ONLY AFTER NUP EXECUTIVE BOARD AGREED TO INVESTIGATE SITUATION AND DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT EROGLU'S RESIGNATION WAS CALLED FOR.

4. THE EROGLU AND ALTINAY AFFAIRS AND THE PARTY DISUNITY THEY REFLECT HAVE EMBARRASSED BOTH KONUK AND THE NUP AND FOCUSED ATTENTION ON PERSONAL FEUDING WITHIN THE PARTY. A MAIN SOURCE OF FRICTION HAS BEEN DENKTASH'S SON, RAIF, NUP SECRETARY GENERAL AND A DEPUTY CONFIDENTIAL

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FROM NICOSIA. YOUNG, NARROW-MINDED, ARBITRARY, AND NATIONALISTIC, HE HAS ALIENATED MANY IN THE PARTY, AND FOSTERED CLIQUES AND BACK-BITING. ISMET KOTAK, AMBITIOUS, OPPORTUNISTIC, AND DISGRUNTLED FORMER MINISTER WHO FAILED TO ACHIEVE POSITION IN POST-ELECTION CABINET, HAS ALSO HELPED TO SOW PARTY DISCORD. NOW NUP DEPUTY FROM FAMAGUSTA, HE HAS PUBLICLY ATTACKED MINISTER OF REHABILITATION (HIS OLD POST), CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF LAND DISTRIBUTION, JOINED IN OPPOSITION'S CALL FOR PARLIAMENTARY INVESTIGATION OF EROGLU (A PROTEGE OF KOTAK'S BITTER NUP RIVAL, INTERIOR MINISTER BILGEHAN), AND IN EFFECT FORMED A VOCAL AND PUBLIC OPPOSITION WITHIN THE NUP.

5. OPPOSITION PARTIES AND PRESS, MEANWHILE, HAVE BEEN HAVING A FIELD DAY. THE CABINET FLAP HAS BEEN PLAYED TO THE HILT, AND THERE HAS BEEN A STEADY CHORUS OF CRITICISM OF PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S ALLEGED INEPTITUDE, NEPOTISM, SECRETIVENESS, AND

ECONOMIC AND RESETTLEMENT POLICIES. TONE OF CRITICISM IN RECENT DAYS HAS BEEN RATHER SHARP, EVEN FOR COMMUNITY ACCUSTOMED TO HYPERBOLE AND HARSH PERSONAL INVECTIVE, AND ONE OPPOSITION JOURNALIST/DEPUTY WENT SO FAR AS TO CHARGE KONUK'S GOVERNMENT WITH APPLYING "MORAL TORTURE" AGAINST THE PEOPLE.

6. COMMENT: PRESENT FLAP IS PROBABLY ONE OF ONLY PASSING INTEREST, AS POLITICAL SQUABBLING IN THE SMALL TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY IS HARDLY NEW. BUT IT DOES SEEM TO BE A LUXURY WHICH THE COMMUNITY CAN NOW ILL AFFORD, IF IT IS TO STAND ON ITS OWN FEET, GRAPPLE WITH THE SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH, AND INSTILL IN ITS PEOPLE THE NEED FOR COOPERATION, SACRIFICE, MORE ACTION, AND LESS TALK. IN TERMS OF THE LOCAL POLITICAL EQUATION, THERE WILL BE SOME MINOR CHANGES. DENKTASH WILL BE EMBARRASSED BUT NOT REALLY WEAKENED. KONUK, WHOSE REPUTATION FOR LEADERSHIP WAS NEVER HIGH TO BEGIN WITH, WILL EMERGE WITH TARNISHED PRESTIGE. EROGLU, EVEN IF CLEARED OF THE CHARGES, WILL BE UNDER A CLOUD AND UNDER PRESSURE TO RESIGN EVENTUALLY. CONFIDENTIAL

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RAIF DENKTASH WILL POSSIBLY BE FACED WITH PRESSURES TO RELINQUISH HIS PARTY LEADERSHIP POST, AND INTERIOR MINISTER ORHAN ZIHNI BILGEHAN, WHO HAD PERSONALLY SELECTED THE TWO DISCREDITED MINISTERS FOR THE CABINET (AS A SOP FOR NOT HAVING BEEN APPOINTED PRIME MINISTER AS DENKTASH HAD PROMISED), MAY EMERGE WITH HIS AMBITIONS INTACT BUT WITH REDUCED POLITICAL CLOUT. KOTAK, FOR HIS PART, MAY HAVE PARLAYED HIS INTRA-PARTY TROUBLEMAKING ABILITY INTO ADDITIONAL POLITICAL CLOUT AND MAY HAVE GAINED FROM THE EMBARRASMENT AND RELATIVE WEAKENING OF HIS NUP RIVALS. PARROTT

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